

The President's Radio Address

August 3, 2007

Good morning. Today I'm traveling to Minneapolis to the site of Wednesday's tragic bridge collapse. Like millions of Americans, I was shocked and saddened when I heard the news that the I-35 bridge gave way during rush hour. The bridge was a major traffic artery, and when it collapsed dozens of cars fell into the Mississippi River.

Laura and I join all Americans in mourning those who lost their lives and in sending our thoughts and prayers to their families. And we pray that those injured will make a full recovery.

On Thursday morning, Transportation Secretary Mary Peters and Federal Highway Administrator Richard Capka traveled to Minneapolis. They announced \$5 million in immediate Federal funding for debris removal and to help restore the flow of traffic. This is just the beginning of the financial assistance we will make available to support the State in its recovery efforts. Several Federal agencies are on the ground aiding State and local officials, including the National Transportation Safety Board, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Coast Guard, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

I recognize how important the I-35 bridge is to the State of Minnesota, and my administration is committed to working closely with Governor Pawlenty and Mayor Rybak to rebuild this bridge as quickly as possible.

In times of tragedy, our hearts ache for those who suffer, yet our hearts are also lifted by acts of courage and compassion. We saw those qualities in the residents of a nearby apartment building who rushed to the scene to offer their help. We saw them in the divers who fought the mighty currents of the Mississippi to reach victims, and we saw them in the firefighters who searched car to car for survivors.

Among the survivors was a group of kids returning from a summer field trip. Their school bus had just passed over the Mississippi River, when the bridge below them gave way. The bus dropped more than 20 feet and came to rest on the guardrail of the collapsed bridge span. A staff member

named Jeremy Hernandez quickly swung into action. He broke open the backdoor and helped evacuate the terrified children to safety. The mother of one of the children on board credited Jeremy's presence of mind with helping spare her daughter from tragedy. She put it this way: "I don't know what he was thinking, but it must have been something really good."

Our country is fortunate to have brave and selfless citizens like Jeremy, and all those who risked their own safety to aid in the rescue. This is a difficult time for the community in Minneapolis, but the people there are decent and resilient, and they will get through these painful hours. As they do, they know that all of America stands with them, and that we will do all we can to help them recover and rebuild.

May God bless those who are hurting in Minneapolis, and may God bless our wonderful country. Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on August 3 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 3. In his radio address, the President referred to Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; and Mayor R.T. Rybak of Minneapolis, MN. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

July 28

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

July 29

In the afternoon, the President welcomed Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom to Camp David, MD.